CONNECTICUT CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION LOBBY

TESTIMONY FOR TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

March 12, 2010

H.B. 5474

An Act Concerning The Establishment Of Electronic Tolls at the State's Borders

The Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby is pleased that a bill is being introduced regarding Electronic Tolling in our State – a concept that we have long supported.

However, it is essential that we consider fairness and equity when we assess the installation of possible systems.

First we must be fair to the residents of Connecticut, who when they travel out of state pay tolls to defray the cost of the highway system in other states. Since tolls were abolished in Connecticut, out-of-state cars, trucks and buses no longer help defray the high cost of maintaining our roads.

Secondly, we must be sure that all drivers in the state contribute to a fund dedicated specifically to transportation. Last spring we attended several public sessions where there was strong local opposition to border tolling. Border area residents were very vocal in their resentment at being singled out for the collection of tolls.

-2-

Therefore, we propose that all Connecticut limited access highways be tolled. We think this alternative is more promising. Toll rates that also include a factor for time-of-day pricing should be included. This variable pricing component in areas with a history of traffic tie ups would help to diminish nonessential rush-hour travel by encouraging travelers who had the option of using the road at off peak hours to be charged less.

In order to gain public support, an education campaign should be conducted. The public must be made aware of the simplicity of the E-Z Pass system of today and also be assured that tolls collected will be directed to the State Transportation Fund.

Connecticut must face the reality that we can no longer afford transportation costs by collections from the gas or gross receipts taxes. We must be fair, use the newest in twenty-first century technology, and we must act promptly.